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ABSTRACT

Since 1968, Goshen College has been offering a program in international education. Called the Study-Service Trimester (SST), the program provides the geographic setting for direct experience in culture shock by exposing students to first-hand, live experiences and confrontations in unfamiliar environments. As part of their general education, elementary education students participate in SST assignments specially fitted for the future teacher in the classroom. Scheduled during the sophomore or junior year of college, SST combines the general studies component with early field work in the middle college years of professional studies. Students generally locate in Caribbean or Central American countries, where they study, work, and interact as a unit, while living in the homes of nationals. The faculty director coordinates a seven-week study program in language study, field trips, and readings and lectures in history, the arts, government, and education. During the second half of the term, students are assigned to Peace Corps-like projects where they work side by side with nationals. Elementary education students are assigned to schools and children's homes for their work experience. Students keep daily journals, stimulating them to interpret and reflect upon the total experience. The college grants each student who satisfactorily completes SST ten credits in language, social science, and humanities. Additional credits may be earned for language proficiency. (RC)

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Goshen College

SP 009 952

BILINGUAL-BICULTURAL PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana

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Signed Samuel L. Yoder Date December 10, 1975

Chief Institutional Representative

Introduction

Since the fall of 1968, Goshen College has been offering a program in international education to all students. Commonly called the Study-Service Trimester (SST), the term is long enough to give the student experience adjusting to a new culture yet not so long as to interfere with other academic pursuits. The Goshen faculty is committed to the goal of preparing students for a pluralistic society by providing opportunities for bilingual-bicultural education in foreign communities.

Development of the Program

The Department of Education believes it is desirable to prepare elementary teachers in several different cultural milieus. The SST program provides the geographic setting for direct experience in culture shock by exposing the student to vivid, first-hand, live experiences and confrontations in strange and unfamiliar environments.

As part of their general education, elementary education students participate in SST assignments specially fitted for the future teacher in the classroom. Scheduled during the sophomore or junior year of college, SST combines the general studies component with early field work in the middle of the college years allowing for orientation prior to the assignment and followup assessment and assimilation in the senior year of professional studies.

The Study-Service units consist of 18-20 students and their faculty director (usually with spouse and family). The college transports students by bus to the port of exit, and then uses chartered or group affinity flights to the final destination. Units generally locate in Caribbean or Central American countries. With a faculty member on location, no direct connection with a foreign college or university is necessary. Students study, work, and interact as a unit very significantly, however, they live in homes of nationals.

The faculty director coordinates a seven-week study program in language study, field trips, readings and lectures in history, the arts, government, and education. The director relies on significant help from nationals in planning the program, and for speakers and other resources. During the second half of the term, students are assigned to Peace Corps-like projects where they mix freely and work side by side with nationals. Elementary education students are assigned to schools and children's homes for their work experience. Students keep daily journals, stimulating them to interpret and reflect upon the total experience. The college grants each student completing SST satisfactorily ten credits in language, social science, and humanities. Many students receive additional credits in language if proficiency levels are adequate.

Quite naturally, the most effective part of the program, for achieving language skills and cultural sensitivity, is the students direct interaction with the people. Through immersion in an environment of deprivation, purpose in life often begins to emerge. The student who gets bitten by flies, picks up a rash, sweats in the heat, and learns to live with tarantulas, yet lives and communicates with his host family, studies them and their culture, gains wider perspectives - about himself, about others, and about the culture. This is the process of culture shock, or "breaking out of the shell of one's own culture." Moreover, most assignments are designed to expose the student to human need, and to help in understanding and working at the human problem.

Elementary education students return to campus to interpret their SST experience further. They utilize their overseas experience in such courses as linguistics, cultural anthropology, social studies, and language. They prepare multiculture units of study to be used in student teaching; they strive to sensitize youngsters in their elementary school classes to other peoples and other cultures.

Personnel

The Study-Service Trimester abroad is operated by the International Studies Department of the college. Teacher Education works closely with that department in overall direction of this component of elementary education. Faculty directors are selected jointly by the president of the college, dean, and director, and most of them come from departments other than education. This gives good cross fertilization and a desirable kind of interdepartmentalism. The directors normally spend a trimester in advance of their responsibilities studying the language intensively in that country, at college expense. The faculty leader becomes for the students, by necessity, not just a classroom professor but a guide, linguist, diplomat, and expeditor. He or she supervises relations with the students' host families, sets up study assignments, monitors them periodically, and counsels in adjustment problems. He or she also arranges field assignments, and visits the student periodically during field experience. All this of course involves close interaction with nationals.

Other than an additional administrator on campus, the study-service term abroad has not resulted in an increase in faculty or staff in that taking a unit overseas reduces the number of teaching faculty needed on campus.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the Study-Service Trimester for the elementary teacher are:

1. To examine and experience the culture of another country. To help the student understand and respect another culture, let him or her sense the meaning of nationhood and give new perspective on one's role in one's own culture by the experience of being a minority: racially, socially, linguistically, and politically. To assist in understanding the revolutions of the times - technical, industrial, political, educational, and that of rising expectations. Through all this, to help the student get the understanding necessary to live and work effectively, in a world made smaller by transportation and communication facilities.

2. To develop greater cultural sensitivity and caring attitudes. To acquire understanding, tolerance of differences, and skills to help minority children gain their identity and respect for their respective cultural backgrounds particularly in bilingual and multicultural communities.
3. To gain the experience of serving in a practical way. To participate in a program or project such as teaching assistants, health service aids, and playground supervisors in a setting other than the dominant culture and language of the student.

Budget

The overall cost to the college to operate the Study-Service Trimester abroad compares favorably with the per student cost on campus or about $1500 per trimester. This means a cost factor of an SST unit of approximately $30,000 per term.

Students pay the regular on-campus trimester fees, that is, tuition, and room and board. Cost of transportation is kept to a minimum by choosing countries close to the perimeter of the United States. Cost of living in the host countries is considerably lower than on the home campus. The student-faculty ratio on SST is favorable for economical operation. Furthermore, the "university without walls" program eliminates pressure for additional residence halls or classroom buildings on the Goshen campus and affects the long-range cost factor.

Small liberal arts colleges such as Goshen seldom gain moderate grants or federal funding for innovative programs in education. The Study-Service Trimester has been deliberately financed within the normal fee structure of the college. The college does not depend on grants or outside gifts or resources so that the program would not be subject to outside control.

Improvement of Teacher Education

Goshen College seeks to prepare caring teachers who are sensitive to the needs of children in a pluralistic society. The Study-Service Trimester is an important factor

in achieving this goal. Coming in the second or third year of college, the SST experience provides a welcome break in the middle of a four-year program. Students enroll in several education courses prior to SST which gives orientation to the service aspect of the term abroad. They study child development and behavior, and explore a variety of learning and teaching techniques; they become familiar with curriculum materials used in Latin American schools through a collection of Spanish and French elementary textbooks available in the bilingual section of Goshen's Instructional Materials Center.

The SST experience brings an element of excitement and anticipation to elementary education at Goshen. It sensitizes teachers to cultural differences and language patterns which they will inevitably face in the classroom. The student teacher understands better the psychology of learning of the oppressed, the motivation of the deprived, and the aspirations of the poor.

Upon return to the campus, students complete additional curriculum workshops where teaching units are prepared for the student teaching assignment. Language arts and social studies units revolve around the SST experience. Use of pictures (slides), artifacts, music, and costumes is common. Student teachers work closely with their supervisors in area cooperating schools where multicultural populations exist. Response from teachers, pupils, and parents is universally enthusiastic.

Students completing the teacher education program may be certified with endorsement in bilingual education by demonstrating acceptable competency levels in language and social-cultural understandings.

Evaluation

Goshen College considers SST the most successful innovation in recent years. Evaluation is on a continuing basis by college administrators. Elementary education students are interviewed by faculty to appraise the overall impact of the SST experience. In

general, students have accepted SST enthusiastically and have taken it in stride in their college programs. Ninety-five percent of all students participate in the SST assignment. Last year 45 students in elementary education spent a trimester (14 weeks) in either Spanish or French speaking cultures.

An analysis of the Goshen College Values Inventory administered during the first week of SST and again upon the group's return to the campus indicates students feel greater worth as an individual. They hold to certain values more, they are more creative, more other-centered, better students, better stewards of their time, and less prejudiced. They report more tolerance toward ethnic and religious groups and greater understanding of cultural bias. They experience new human relationships with leaders and fellow students and report that this resulted in personal growth and greater self-confidence. They report greater appreciation for the United States, but also become more critical of U.S. foreign policy. Students felt they could more adequately handle leadership responsibility because of the demands placed on them during the field experience and the atmosphere of greater independence in which they lived and worked during SST.

Goshen's elementary teachers find positions in bicultural and bilingual communities. Last year, ninety-five percent of those completing the program found employment in elementary schools.